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Written statement* submitted by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[14 February 2014]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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The Universal Periodical Review of Nigeria

The Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Bill was drafted as a response to concerns about the consistent failure of Nigerian authorities to adopt and implement a legal framework to address and prevent sexual violence. The aim of the bill is to eliminate the occurrence of gender-based violence in Nigeria. The policy has been rejected twice in the past year.

Member states have recommended that the Nigerian Senate pass the Violence Against Persons Bill in recommendation 135.21 of the Universal Periodic Review. Recommendation 135.104 also stressed the need to combat gender-related violence and advised a more effective legal aid system for women survivors of violence. However, this bill that would allow for a more effective legal aid system is still before the upper house. We welcome Nigeria's acceptance of these recommendations and we urge the Senate of Nigeria to promptly pass the bill.

The report also encourages Nigeria in its recommendation 135.56 to implement the newly created National Action Plan on Security Council Resolution 1325. This is an essential tool to ensure sustainable peace through the involvement of women and to end discrimination and gender-based violence. We welcome Nigeria's accepting this recommendation and we encourage a prompt and thorough implementation including the allocation of a specific budget for this purpose. We also encourage all implementing agencies to localise the newly created NAP to ensure institutional support and mechanisms for effective implementation and monitoring.

WILPF had also suggested recommendations on the limitation of arms trade and the use of explosive weapons, as these are direct factors hindering the enjoyment of human rights in Nigeria. The Arms Trade Treaty, adopted in April 2013 and ratified by Nigeria in August 2013 acknowledges the link between gender-based violence and the international arms trade in a legally binding document for the first time. Further, in its 24th session, the Human Rights Council dealt with arms trade through the adoption of a resolution on the impact of arms transfer on human rights in conflict. This marks a crucial step towards acknowledging the relevance of disarmament in securing human rights in general and those of women in particular.

For its commitment with the Arms Trade Treaty, Nigeria has become a leader and advocate on disarmament. We commend Nigeria to follow through on its commitments on the Arms Trade Treaty and establish a national commission to oversee its application.

Despite these important milestones towards acknowledging the impact of arms on human rights, member states are yet to issue recommendations on these areas through the UPR mechanism. We encourage member states to be consistent in the future with their previous efforts and to bear in mind the multiple factors causing gender-based violence and human rights violations, including arms trade, and to issue recommendations in this sense.